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Marco Rubio says 300 student visas have been revoked, including detentions at Tufts, Columbia and more

By **Caroline Linton**

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Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Thursday that 300 student visas have been revoked, asserting "we have a right" to rescind the visas of students who participate in campus protests, despite questions about due process and First Amendment objections.

"If you apply for a visa to enter the United States and be a student, and you tell us that the reason why you're coming to the United States is not just because

you want to write op-eds, but because you want to participate in movements that are involved in doing things like vandalizing universities, harassing students, taking over buildings, creating a ruckus, we're not going to give you a visa," Rubio said. "If you lie to us and get a visa then enter the United States, and with that visa, participate in that sort of activity, we're going to take away your visa."

Rubio continued that if a student then lost his or her visa, "you're no longer legally in the United States. And we have a right, like every country in the world has a right, to remove you from our country."

Rubio said that at least 300 students had their visas revoked. "We do it every day. Every time I find one of these lunatics, I take away their visa," he said.

It's unclear if these students were notified of the revocations in advance.

Rubio's remarks came in response to a question about Tufts University graduate student Rumeysa Ozturk, a Turkish national who was taken into custody by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Massachusetts on Tuesday.

A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said Ozturk had "engaged in activities in support of Hamas," but did not provide details about her alleged activities. Ozturk was one of four university students who was listed as the author of a March 2024 campus newspaper opinion piece urging Tufts to adopt resolutions from the student government to "acknowledge the Palestinian genocide" and "divest from companies with direct or indirect ties to Israel." That article does not mention Hamas.

Ozturk is currently being held at a federal detention facility in Louisiana.

The university said in a statement that she had been returning from a Ramadan iftar dinner when she was detained. Surveillance video showed she was taken into custody by six ICE agents who appear wearing masks and plain clothes and driving unmarked cars.

A University of Alabama doctoral student originally from Iran was also taken into custody on Tuesday, according to the university. A search of an ICE database showed the student, Alireza Doroudi, was in custody. It was unclear as of Thursday why he was being detained or where he was being held.

Both Ozturk and Doroudi were in the U.S. on F-1 visas, which allow international students to enter the country to study full-time at American universities.

Labor unions representing university professors on Wednesday filed a lawsuit claiming the detentions of noncitizen students and faculty is a violation of the First Amendment, as is the threat to remove Columbia University's \$400 million in federal funds if the university did not make changes.

The lawsuit cites President Trump's March 4 post on social media that those participating in "illegal protests" would be arrested, saying that "under First Amendment doctrine, the category 'illegal protests' is carefully circumscribed."



Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks during a press conference in Georgetown, Guyana, on March 27, 2025.

NATHAN HOWARD / AP

"Nevertheless, the post did not say how federal officials would identify 'illegal protests' or 'agitators' for purposes of implementing the President's stated policy, nor did it otherwise provide guidance to faculty, students, or administrators seeking to exercise (or allow others to exercise) First Amendment rights while avoiding the risk of imprisonment, deportation, expulsion, arrest, or loss of "[a]ll" federal funding," the lawsuit claims.

The high-profile detentions of Ozturk and Doroudi followed the detention earlier this month of Mahmoud Khalil, a former Columbia University grad student who had been active in the 2024 campus pro-Palestinian protests. Khalil is a Palestinian born in Syria with a green card, or legal permanent residency, not a student visa. Khalil's attorney, Amy Greer, said at the time of his detention that an ICE agent said they were acting on a State Department order to revoke his student visa, but when they were informed that Khalil was in the U.S. as a permanent resident with a green card, the agent said they were revoking that, too.

After he was taken into custody, the government said it was invoking a rarely used section of U.S. immigration law to justify Khalil's detention and eventual deportation that allows the secretary of state to make noncitizens subject to deportation if he determines their presence and activities threaten the foreign policy interests of the U.S., citing alleged support for Hamas, a U.S.-designated terror group. CBS News has not found evidence that Khalil has said he supports Hamas.

In a court filing earlier this week, the government also alleged that Khalil failed to disclose on his immigration forms his involvement with UNRWA, the United Nations agency for Palestine refugees; the Syria office of the British embassy in Beirut; and a group known as Columbia University Apartheid Divest.

The government also said in the filing that claims by Khalil's attorneys that his detention violated the First Amendment were a "red herring."

Khalil is currently in custody in a federal detention facility in Louisiana.

Rubio said after Khalil was taken into custody that the administration would be revoking the visas and green cards "of Hamas supporters in America so they can be deported."

When asked on "Face the Nation with Margaret Brennan" if Rubio could provide evidence to support a link to terrorism, or whether Khalil was simply espousing a controversial political point of view, Rubio cited news footage, saying "these guys take over entire buildings, they vandalize colleges."

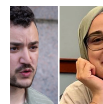
Rubio said Khalil is "going to leave – and so are others."

"We're going to keep doing it," Rubio said about revoking visas.

Kaia Hubbard and Camilo Montoya-Galvez contributed to this report.

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In: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Marco Rubio

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